

## **Historic, Archive Document**

Do not assume content reflects current scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.



# Small-Scale Agriculture Today

Office for Small-Scale Agriculture



## Fall 1990

U.S. Department of Agriculture - Cooperative State Research Service - Agricultural Research For A Better Tomorrow

### AT ISSUE...EVERY STUDENT

Agriculture is the science or art of cultivating land in the raising of crops; husbandry; farming. However, it is much more. The agricultural industry involves everyone because the industry provides foodstuffs for mankind. In addition, the industry comprises a wide assortment of employment opportunities that help to foster commerce and play a significant role in the environmental health of the countryside. The importance of agriculture to the United States and the world cannot be overemphasized and that is why everyone should encourage the teaching of agriculture to all students.

"Agriculture is too important a topic to be taught only to the relatively small percentage of students considering careers in agriculture and pursuing vocational agriculture studies." "...at least some instruction about agriculture should be offered to all students, regardless of their career goals or whether they are urban, suburban, or rural." These quotations come from a recent National Academy of Sciences report, "Agricultural Literacy: New Directions for Education."

The report also cites *Ag in the Classroom*, a national program coordinated by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, as a successful model for educating students about agriculture.

*Ag in the Classroom* is carried out in each State by a group composed of educators, government officials, and representatives from farm organizations and agribusiness. Emphasis is placed on incorporating agricultural information into the subjects that are already being taught, such as geography, science, social studies, and language arts.

Students in Utah learn what it was like to be a cowboy, to make soap, and to write with quill pen while studying history. Science students in Alaska collect vital snow data which will be used to predict wildlife populations, snowpack moisture for spring farming, and other environmental conditions. Minnesota social studies students eagerly anticipate arrival of the "Ag Magazine," a quarterly reader filled with agricultural information. And junior high school students in many States are learning about high-tech agriculture and about the career opportunities in agriculture through a videotape called "21st Century Explorers."

This is just a small sample of the wide variety of activities that are taking place in kindergarten through twelfth grade classrooms across the country. Concerned representatives from the education, agriculture, and government sectors are working together to ensure that today's students will gain enough knowledge to support wise agricultural policies and programs.

If you or anyone else in your community would like to have more information, contact: Shirley Traxler, Director, *Ag in the Classroom*, Room 317-A, USDA, Washington, D.C. 20250; telephone 202-447-5727.

### IMPORTANT

The Office for Small-Scale Agriculture (OSSA) telephone and Fax numbers have been changed. Send your topics, technologies, and calendar of events to OSSA; telephone 202-401-4640, Fax 202-401-5179, or Dialcom-AGS3037 H. Kerr.

### TOPICS AND TECHNOLOGY

*Specialty Flowers* - This is the latest factsheet of the series "A Small-Scale Agriculture Alternative" from the Office for Small-Scale Agriculture. Free, the publication lists more than 25 sources for information. Contact: Bud Kerr, USDA-CSRS, OSSA, Suite 342, Washington, D.C. 20250-2200; telephone 202-401-4640, Fax 202-401-5179.

*Increasing* - Imports of beef tomatoes are popular with consumers, more than doubling in 2 years. The Dutch exported 6.3 million pounds in 1989, compared to 2.8 million pounds in 1987. Is this a niche market small-scale producers are overlooking?

*Windbreak* - To provide maximum benefits, it is essential to plan well in advance of any planting. For information contact: Robert Fewin, Texas Forest Service, Route 3, Box 216, Lubbock, TX 79401; telephone 806-746-5801.

*Cut Flowers* - The growing interest in cut flower production has raised the issue of how best to irrigate the plants. The grower, as the user, should understand irrigation systems. Contact: David S. Ross, Extension Agricultural Engineering Department, College Park, MD 20742-5711; telephone 301-405-1188.



**TIP** - Unless otherwise specified, always remember that 1 part of dried herbs is the equivalent of 4 parts of the same herb in fresh form.

**UP** - US farmland values went up 4 percent during 1989 to an average of \$693 per acre. It was the third straight year of annual increases, including 6 percent in 1988 and 6 percent in 1987." (The Cotton Gin and Oil Mill Press, July 14, 1990, p.6)

**What?** - "New US clean air legislation, which would require the use of better oxygenated fuel in at least 44 US cities, could open up a new market for ethanol, an oxygen-rich alcohol made primarily from corn. Increased demand for ethanol, and thus for corn, could drive up the cost of feed for cattle and hogs and depress soybean and oilseed prices, because of increased production of corn meal, a by-product of ethanol production." (Journal of Commerce, June 6, 1990, p.6A).

**Animal Industry** - Live Animal Trade and Transport Magazine, quarterly costs \$20 to US, addresses and \$26 outside the US per year. Contact: Dale Anderson, Publisher, P.O. Box 44110, Fort Washington, MD 20744-1100; telephone 301-292-1970/1988, Fax 301-292-1787.

**Chainsaw Injuries** - Despite the availability of safety devices, injuries continue to occur. Don't contribute to the problem. Update your equipment and personal protection before you cut down your next tree.

**Proceedings** - The 414-page book, Income Opportunities for the Private Landowner through Management of Natural Resources and Recreational Areas, costs \$21.50, and documents efforts by many people throughout the nation who promote activities for diversifying and increasing income opportunities for rural landowners. Contact: William Grafton, West Virginia University, 307 Percival Hall, Morgantown, WV 26506-6125; telephone 304-293-4797.

**Plastic Recycling** - A firm in New England will pick up used plastic film: clear, opaque, even film which has been spray-painted with a water-soluble paint. For further information contact: Tom Goetting, Ingenuity Plastic Recovery, New Haven, CT 06519; telephone 203-785-0458; Fax 203-624-3377.

**Something Added** - Add a little spice to your life; it may improve your blood sugar level. Tests show that cinnamon, apple pie spice, cloves, bay leaves, and turmeric can do more than just enhance the flavor and aroma of food. Extracts of each of these spices tripled insulin's performance in getting glucose metabolized in a widely used test tube assay of insulin activity. Contact: Richard A. Anderson, USDA-ARS, Vitamin and Mineral Lab, Beltsville Human Nutrition Research Center, Beltsville, MD 20705; telephone 301-344-2091.

**Be Aware Truckers** - Too many small-farm operators are at risk by not being aware of the Interstate Commerce Commission (ICC) regulations that require them to have a registered agent in each State they travel through or do business in. For more information you may call Edward C. Fernandez, ICC; telephone 202-275-7591 or contact: Elinor S. Priesman, State

Laws Division, American Trucking Association, Inc., 2200 Mill Road, Alexandria, VA 22314; telephone 703-838-1881.

**FREE** - A catalog listing of publications about alternative and miscellaneous crops (Montguide). Contact: Irene H. Noyes, Supervisor, Extension Publications, Montana State University, Bozeman, MT 59717; telephone 406-994-3273.

**Do-It-Yourself** - One method for sterilizing soil or compost is to enclose a 4-inch layer of the soil in a clear roasting bag set on a flat pan, and bake at 200°F for 2 hours. Use a meat thermometer to monitor the soil temperature. One half hour at 180°F (82°C) will kill soil insects and disease organisms, and most weed seed and plant viruses.

**Snack Melon** - Researchers have succeeded in breeding two disease-resistant, cantaloupelike melons with their edible rinds with a smooth skin and firm flesh like an apple. Contact: Perry E. Nugent, USDA-ARS, Vegetable Laboratory, 2875 Savannah Highway, Charleston, SC 29414; telephone 803-556-0840.

**Competition** - "The Soviet Union is the world's largest apple producer. Not only is it going to become a good market, but it would potentially become a competitor, too...T. Elwell." (Good Fruit Grower, May 1, 1990, p.19)

**TIP** - Apples put in a sack with green tomatoes will enhance ripening. Apples stored with potatoes will reduce sprouting.

**Reforestation** - President Bush has taken to planting trees during visits to the 50 States. However, more government, corporate, and individual (yours) support is needed to make his effort a lush and green reality.

**Shiitake** - "If a grower maintains moisture content at adequate levels, ironwood has potential as an alternative tree species for shiitake production...Mitch Gilbert." (Friends of the Forest, November 1989, p.3)

**TIP** - Jogging a mile in 10 minutes only burns 23 more calories than walking that same mile in 15 minutes (for a 154 pound person) say experts with the University of Georgia Extension Service.

**Reporter** - A national newspaper devoted to hometown government is published 10 times each year. For a complimentary back copy contact: Cathy Corder, National Association of Towns and Townships, 1522 K Street, N.W., Suite 730, Washington, D.C. 20005; telephone 202-737-5200.

**Caution** - Always use chemical pesticides according to the label recommendations and only when needed and sparingly.

**Membership** - California Rare Fruit Growers (CRFG) is one of the largest amateur fruit growing, nonprofit educational societies in the world. Its purpose is to encourage and further public and scientific interest, research, education, and preservation of rare fruit plants. To join, annual dues are \$12. Contact: Pat Sawyer, CRFG, Inc., Fullerton Arboretum, California State University, Fullerton, CA 92634; telephone 714-526-7198.



**Oomingmak** - The word means the "Musk Ox" in the Eskimo language, and "Qivint" is the registered trademark for domestic musk ox wool used in unique garments. Price list of Qivint Handknits items is free. Contact: Oomingmak, Musk Ox Producer's Cooperative, 604 H Street, Anchorage, AK 99501; telephone 907-272-9225.

**California Only** - The Farm Energy Loan Organization is to assist in-state farmers in demonstrating energy-conserving farming practices and technologies that reduce both indirect and direct energy consumption. A total of \$2 million is available; deadline for application, December 31, 1990. For the application contact: Tony Wong, California Energy Commission, 1516 North Street, Sacramento, CA 95814-5512; telephone 916-324-3338.

**Computers** - "Only 3 percent of U.S. farmers use computers for financial record-keeping. The most common spot for computerized farms: the West Coast." (Wall Street Journal, May 24, 1990, p.1A)

**Soil Test** - The ground-softening effect of early fall rains makes an ideal time for taking soil samples from lawns and crop land. Get back test results and take proper action before hard winter weather sets in.

**New - Multicolored lilies** - brilliant red, creamy yellow, and bright lavender - will be available year round thanks to a new temperature treatment. Contact: Mark S. Roh, USDA-ARS, Florist and Nursery Crops Laboratory, Beltsville Agricultural Center, Beltsville, MD 20705; telephone 301-344-3570.

**FREE** - The 1991 Shiitake Mushroom Catalog for procurement of State Registered "CERTIFIED" Spawn (seed). Contact: Thelma Everett, Carolina Agro-Tech, Rt.5, Box 84, Henderson, NC 27536; telephone 919-438-2674.

**Super - Pest of the Garden and Small Farm: A Grower's Guide to Using Less Pesticide** is a new 276-page book and costs \$25. Contact: Jessica Brown, Ag Access, P.O. Box 2008, Davis CA 95617, telephone 916-756-7177; Fax 916-756-7188.

**Farm Facts** - To get a copy of the report "US Farmers Preferences for Agricultural and Food Policy in the 1990's," North Central Regional Extension Bulletin #361. Contact: Marshall Martin, Department of Agricultural Economics, Purdue University, West Lafayette, IN 47907; telephone 317-494-4268.

**Beneficial** - Bi-color lespedeza is one of the best food and cover plants for quail and other game birds. Another benefit; plantings of this perennial helps to control soil erosion.

**Future** - Cranberries in Michigan? Perhaps. Contact: Gina Antonioti, Western Michigan University (WMU), Horticultural Economic Development Center, 200-A Wood Hall, Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5054; telephone 616-387-2842.

**Genetically Engineered** - Cotton now being test grown at Texas A&M University has the ability to fight off insects larvae because the plant produces a lethal protein. Contact: Andy Welch, Texas Department of Agriculture, P.O. BOX 12847, Austin, TX 78711; telephone 512-463-7466.

**Interconnected** - "To lower production costs we must genetically adopt the animal to the environment rather than the environment to the animal and concentrate production where the environment is most favorable. In most environments low cost also means seasonal rather than year-round production and local rather than national marketing. It is all one very interconnected ball of wax---H. Allen Nation." (The Stockman Grass Farmer, July 1990, p.24).

**TIP** - Don't run the tap and waste water to get a cool drink; chill water in bottles in the refrigerator, and shake the bottle before serving to incorporate air in the water so it doesn't taste flat.

**Trivia** - Eggs are classified according to how much they weigh per dozen -- Jumbo, 30 oz.; Extra Large, 27 oz.; Large, 24 oz.; Medium, 21 oz.; Small, 18 oz.; and Pee Wee, 15 oz.

**Computer Programs** - A new Institute of Food and Agricultural Sciences (IFAS) software catalog is available from the University of Florida. It contains a description of each computer program, the cost, and a description of the equipment necessary to run each program. Contact: Denis Watson, IFAS Software Support, Building 120, Room 203, University of Florida, Gainesville, FL 32611-0162; telephone 904-392-7853.

#### SELECTED PERIODICALS

**Catfish.** Processors' monthly report on farm-raised catfish. Round weight processed, prices paid, inventory, quantity sold, and price. 12 issues plus 2 issues of Catfish Production. Order # PCF. 1 yr, \$15; 2 yrs, \$27; 3 yrs, \$37.

**Floriculture Crops.** Area of production and sales of cut flowers, flowering potted plants, foliage, bedding/garden plants, cut cultivated greens, and special Hawaiian crops. Annual, April. Order # ZCW. 1 yr, \$7.50; 2 yrs, \$13; 3 yrs, \$19.50.

**Honey.** Annual report of number of colonies of bees, honey, production price, and value, and honey stocks as of December 15, by States. Annual, February. Order # ZH0. 1 yr, \$5; 2 yrs, \$8; 3 yrs, \$12.

**Mink.** Number of mink pelts produced during the marketing year, number of females bred to produce pelts, number of mink farms, average marketing price per pelt,, and value of pelts produced. Annual, July. Order # ZMI. 1 yr, \$5; 2 yrs, \$8; 3 yrs, \$12.

**Mushrooms.** Area, production, price and value, by variety, all producing States, utilization, and intentions for coming year. Annual, August. Order # ZMU. 1 yr, \$6; 2 yrs, \$10; 3 yrs, \$15.

**Trout Production.** Grower sales and cost of production for selected States. Annual, September. Order # ZTP. 1 yr, \$6; 2 yrs, \$10; 3 yrs, \$15.

Make check payable to Economic Research Service - National Agricultural Statistical Service (ERS-NASS) and mail to: ERS-NASS, P.O. Box 1608, Rockville, MD 20849-1608; telephone 800-999-6779 or 301-725-7937



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

*October 14-17, 1990* - 1990 Association for Farming Systems Research-Extension (AFSRE) Symposium, Holiday Inn University Place, East Lansing, MI. Contact: R. James Bingen, Michigan State University, Institute of International Agriculture, 324 Agriculture Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824-1039; telephone 517-353-5262, Fax 517-353-1888.

*October 20-21, 1990* - Missouri Small Farmers Gathering, Lyndell Galloway Farm, Centralia, MO. Contact: Lyndell Galloway, telephone 714-682-3939 or Virgil Gough, telephone 314-983-2289.

*October 22-26, 1990* - International Symposium on Goat Production. Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL. Contact: Claude McGowans, Room 202, Perry Paige Building, Florida A&M University, Tallahassee, FL 32307; telephone 904-599-3546.

*October 22-24, 1990* - New England Greenhouse Conference, Sheraton, Sturbridge, MA. Contact: Richard Shaw, Plant Sciences Department, University of Rhode Island, Room 202 Greenhouses, Kingston, RI 02881; telephone 401-792-5996.

*October 29-30, 1990* - 12th Annual Rural and Small Schools Conference, Kansas State University, Union, Manhattan, KS. Conference theme is "Small Schools Images for a New Age." Contact: Barbara Havlicek, Bluemont Hall Room 352, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506; telephone 913-532-5886.

*November 8-9, 1990* - The 1990 Intensive Grazing Conference, Holiday Inn North, Jackson, MS. Contact: H. Allan Nation, The Stockman Grass Farmer, P.O. Box 9607, Jackson, MS 39286-9607; telephone 601-981-4805.

*November 16-17, 1990* - Alaska Agricultural Symposium and Trade Show, Clarion Hotel, Anchorage, AK. Contact: Doug Warner, Box 949, Palmer, AK 99645; telephone 907-745-7200.

*Dec 10-12, 1990* - Washington State Vegetable Association Annual Convention and Trade Show, Red Lion Motor Inn, Pasco, WA. Contact: Erik Sorensen, Washington State University, Cooperative Extension, Franklin County Court House, Pasco, WA 99301; telephone 509-545-3511.

*January 15-17, 1991* - Fifth North Carolina Vegetable Expo Tradeshow and Workshops, North Raleigh Hilton, Raleigh, NC. Contact: Doug Sanders, Cooperative Extension, Box 7609, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, NC 27695-7609; telephone 919-737-3283.

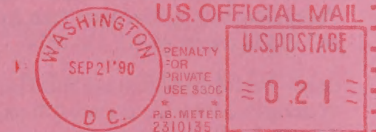
*(Mention of commercial enterprises or brand names does not constitute endorsement or imply preference by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.)*

**Please Circulate**

USDA/CSRS/SPPS  
Office for Small-Scale Agriculture  
14th & Independence Avenue SW  
Washington, D.C. 20250-2200

F90

BALTIMORE, MD  
DROP SHIPMENT  
AUTHORIZATION 26  
PRESORTED FIRST-CLASS



04702 22007/20705AGRINC1 0001  
NATIONAL AGRICULTURAL LIBRARY  
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
SERIALS UNIT, RM 002  
BELTSVILLE MD 20705